

Declaration of Commitment

A Call for Economic Security and Hope for All Residents in San Bernardino County

We, the People of San Bernardino County, call for an end to poverty in our communities. Over the last three years, Americans have come together to protect our homes, lend strength and support in times of tragedy, and to build a national political dialogue. We have discussed our collective responsibility for human dignity, equity and well-being. It is time to bring a renewed focus and energy on helping people out of poverty.

Our communities have incredible potential for a high quality of life, for creating meaningful work and for building common bonds. However, this potential cannot be realized while there are still people who live in poverty. With the elimination of the causes of poverty, everyone will be better off, and we will have healthier, stronger and safer communities;

Whereas, this declaration is addressed to the people of San Bernardino County; to their politicians and pastors, their commercial enterprises and community activists; to their prosperous and their poor, and to their schools and social service agencies. We will have a stake in the well-being of our communities and share the responsibility for eradicating the threat to human dignity, security and quality of life that poverty represents;

Whereas, poverty is contrary to a core belief in our country; that people are entitled to basic human dignity. Poverty denies people this basic right by putting the elements of dignity out of reach. Poverty is a barrier to food, education, housing, transportation, employment and healthcare (including dental, vision and mental healthcare) ; it makes the cost, quality and availability of these basic needs unattainable;

Whereas, A variety of points of view exist that unite us in our commitment to end poverty

- Poverty conflicts with deeply held religious beliefs of charity and Justice
- Poverty conflicts with the long-term economic well being of our communities.
- Poverty conflicts with the ability of people to seize the opportunities that this country affords;

Whereas, in a community without poverty, adults will have meaningful and gainful work. Families will have access to quality healthcare. Parent will be assured their children are learning the skills and values that will lead to a bright future. Communities will be stable and safe. Homelessness will be eliminated and homes will provide warmth and shelter rather than financial hardship and environmental hazards. Everyone will feel connected to a responsibility for the common good;

Whereas, in this time of unprecedented improvements in global standards of living, the official poverty rate in the United States rose from 12.5 percent in 2003 to 12.6 percent in 2005. During that same period, the number of people in poverty also increased by 1.1 million to 37.0 million. The poverty rate for children remained unchanged at 17.6 percent, and the total number of people 65 and older also remained unchanged at 3.6 million, but the poverty rate for people 18 to 64 rose from 10.8 percent in 2003 to 11.1 percent in 2005. Median household income, in decline since 2000, held steady in 2005;

Whereas, our community is fortunate to have a number of resources available in our fight to end poverty. We have dedicated, committed educators, and quality institutions of higher learning. We have healthy and active faith communities and a non-profit sector. We have a business community with a tradition of philanthropy, service, and commitment to improving the quality of life in our region. We have public programs designed to serve people in poverty. We have natural resources and community assets available to everyone. And we have a strong local culture that emphasizes hard work and life-long learning.

Therefore we now declare, by affixing our signatures to this declaration, a commitment to work in the next year and in the years to come to build economic security and create an environment in San Bernardino County where poverty no longer exists . Signed this 10th Day of May, 2007.



Signature

Print Name

City, State, Zip